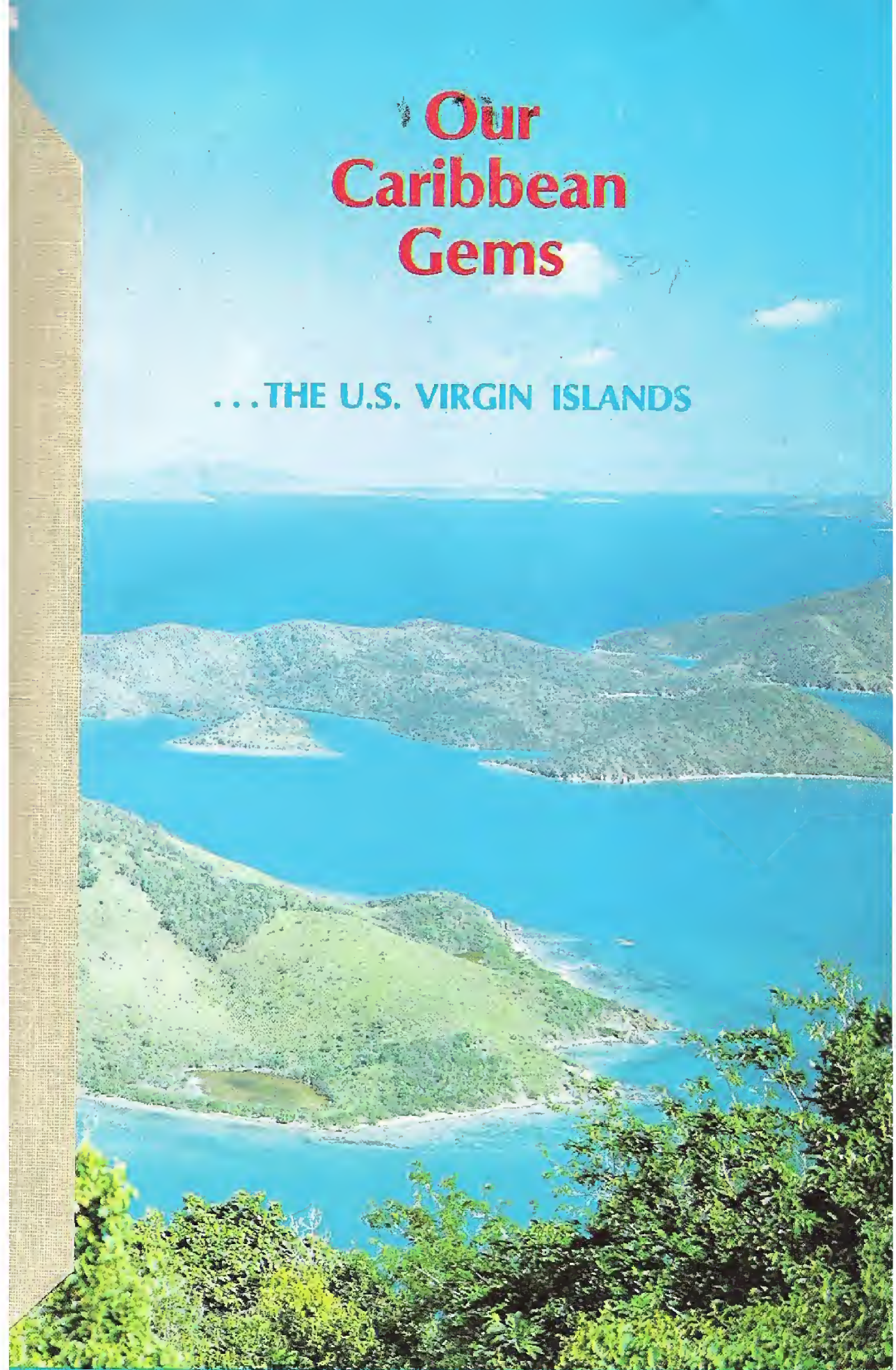


# Our Caribbean Gems

...THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

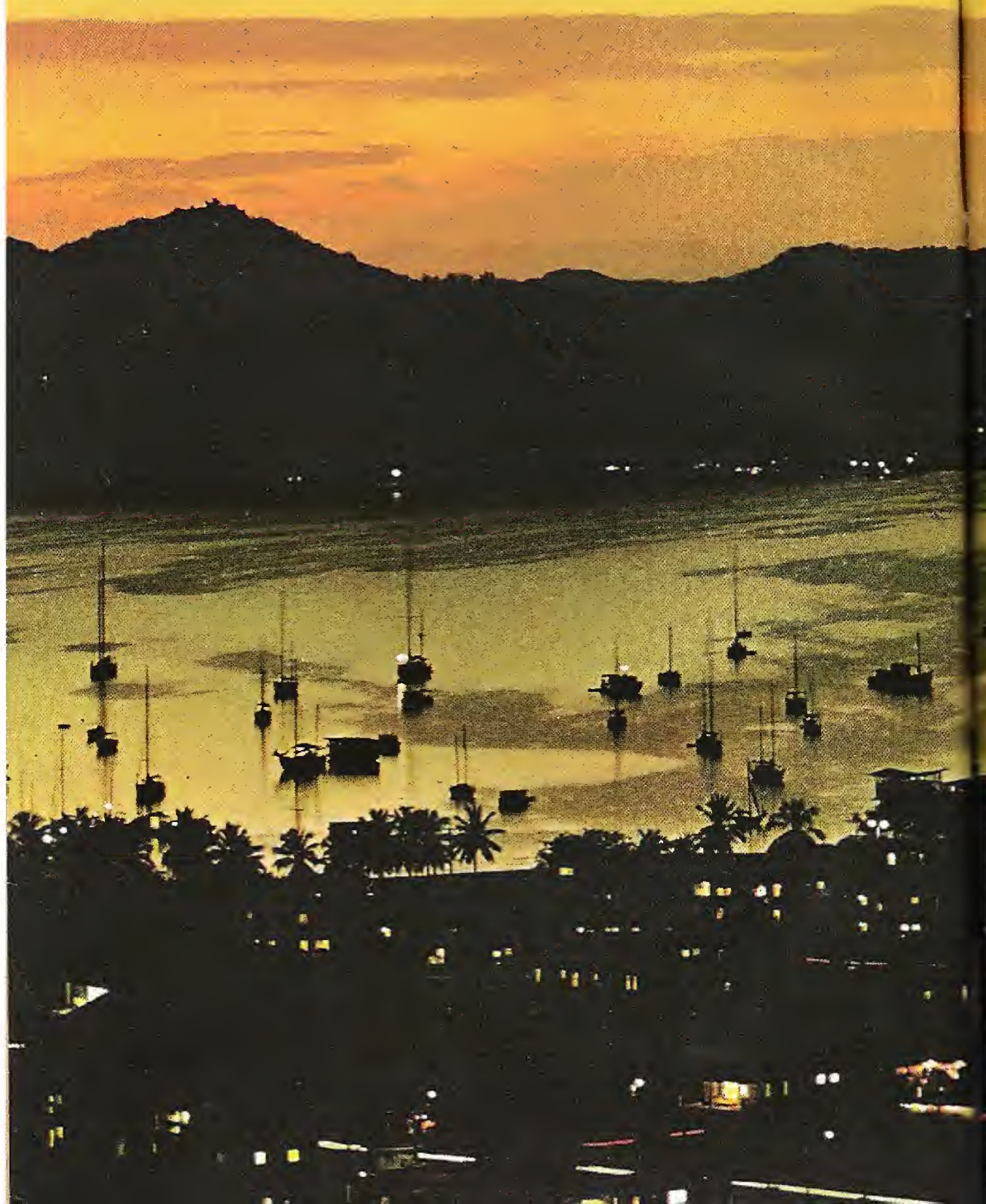


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



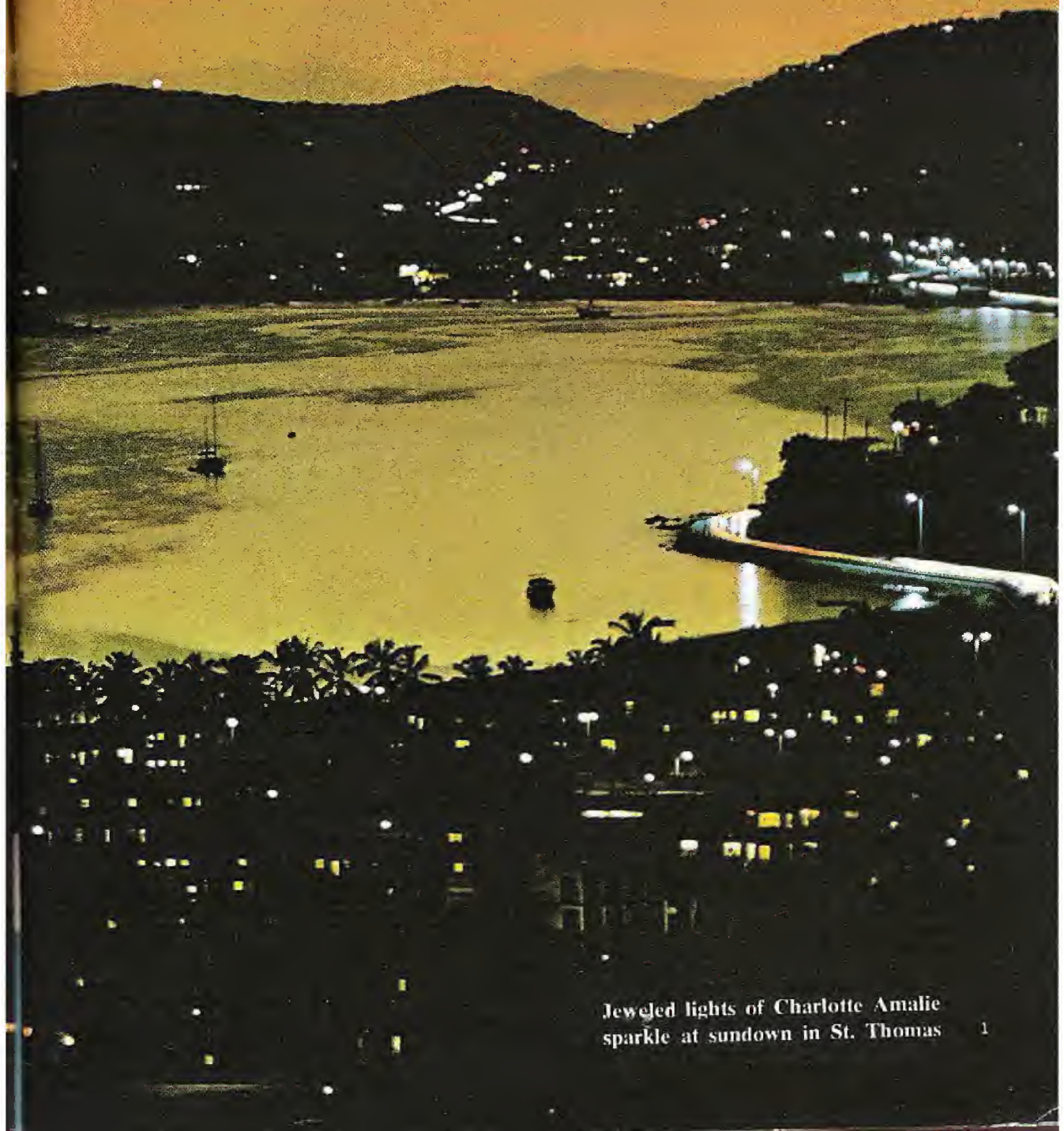
# Our Caribbean Gems

...THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS





**T**he Virgin Islands, a necklace of Islands encircled by the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, proudly boast of some of the most beautiful beaches in the world. These storybook islands have a magical charm--in the beat of the steel drums, in the language with a Calypso lilt, in their history, and in their architecture. Seven flags have flown over the Virgin Islands--the Dutch; the Danish; the French; the Knights of Malta; the Spanish; the British, and the United States, and these influences are now interwoven in a distinctive culture pattern to be found nowhere else in the world. From the sundrenched beaches to the numerous misty mountain peaks, a visit to the Virgin Islands is an adventure one will never forget.



Jeweled lights of Charlotte Amalie  
sparkle at sundown in St. Thomas





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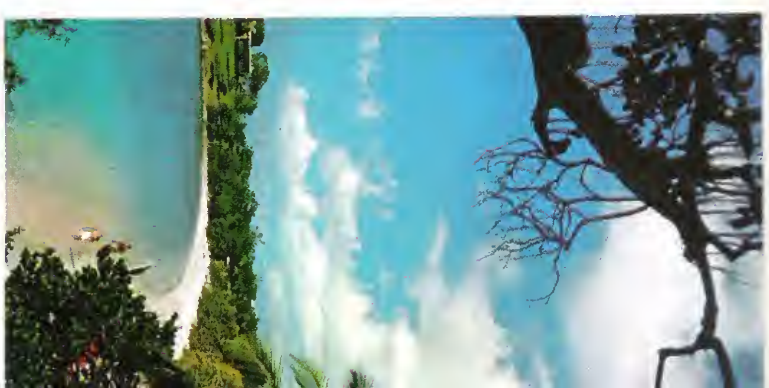




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Glistening white sand and azure waters lure the traveler to the renowned beaches of our Virgin Islands, while the sounds of the calypso guitar echo the relaxing mood of the islands.

## Introduction

The Department of the Interior, America's "Department of Natural Resources," administers thousands of islands, large and small, in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, some of them thousands of miles distant from the continental United States. Among the most prominent areas are the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and

the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

The Department's responsibilities regarding the territories center in the Office of Territories, Washington, D.C., but the islands conduct much of their own administration, participating with the Department in a concerted

effort to improve living conditions, education, health, and the economy of their peoples. These islands have a population of over 200,000. The Office of Territories makes the needs of the islands known to other Federal agencies; studies the economic, social, and political situations of the territories; and proposes policies, pro-

grams, and other actions for alleviating or eliminating problems.

Two former Territories, Alaska and Hawaii, are now States. Puerto Rico has Commonwealth status, and the Philippines are independent. One of the objectives of the Department of the Interior is to develop the territories into self-governing areas.



## Our Islands in the Sun Beckon

The United States Virgin Islands, administered by the Department of the Interior, are part of that curving chain of the Greater and Lesser Antilles separating the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Of the more than 50 islands and cays making up the American Virgin Islands in the West Indies, only three have any size or population of great significance — St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix. Most of the other islands are uninhabited and uninhabitable.

These rugged mountainous islands of volcanic origin rise sharply from the sea. The British Virgin Islands lie immediately to the north and east of St. John. The total area of the three U.S. islands is approximately 130 square miles, of which St. Croix accounts for about two-thirds. St. Thomas and St. John rise out of the same plateau, their mountain peaks reaching a maximum of 1,500 feet above sea level. Between these two islands and St. Croix the Caribbean Sea deepens to 15,000 feet.

St. Croix, with 84 square miles, is 28 miles long and up to 6 miles wide. St. Thomas has 28 square miles and is 13 miles long and up to 4 miles wide. St. John has 20 square miles, is 9 miles

long and up to 4 miles wide. It lies about 3 miles east of St. Thomas. St. Croix is about 40 miles south of St. Thomas and St. John.

The capital of the United States Virgin Islands, Charlotte Amalie, (pronounced Ah-mahl'-ya) is on St. Thomas, once a vital shipping center. St. Croix, with its two towns of Frederiksted and Christiansted, is the largest island and the agricultural center of the group. The rugged terrain and beautiful beaches have given the smallest and least populated of the three, St. John, a quiet charm all its own. The beautiful Virgin Islands National Park is on this island.

The flora is tropical. Hibiscus, bougainvillea, flamboyant, canaria, and other lush blooms are found in abundance throughout the islands. Most of St. Thomas and St. John and much of St. Croix are thickly covered with various types of shrubs and trees, but these are not of accepted commercial value, nor of the size or character to be considered forests. Many of them bear fruits, such as the mango and the sourpup. There are stone, sand, and gravel suitable for building, but no other minerals in commercial quantities have been found in the islands. Game

## THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS



### Distances

990 miles east and south of Miami  
1,400 miles southeast of New York City  
40 miles east of Puerto Rico





fishing is good — sailfish, tarpon, marlin, kingfish, wahoo, Spanish mackerel, tuna, and barracuda are among the catches.

### *Virgin Islands National Park Greets Visitors*

This park, embracing about two-thirds of the Island of St. John, was established in 1956, when Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc., of which Laurance Rockefeller is president, presented more than 5,000 acres of parkland to the people of the United States. The park is administered by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. The park superintendent's address is Box 1707, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801. Ranger stations are at Cruz Bay, Lameshur, and Red Hook.

Buck Island Reef National Monument is also part of the National Park System. Buck Island, 3½ miles north-east off St. Croix, is a volcanic rock formation about 300 acres. Surrounding it are 550 acres of marine coral gardens of unusual beauty and scientific interest. A most unusual feature of the monument is an underwater trail, complete with submerged interpretive markers for skilled swimmers. The trail is 250 yards long, in a circular course, in 12 to 15 feet of water. Buck Island itself is a rookery for the frigate bird (Man of War) and pelican, and an important hatching area for the green turtle.

### *History of the Islands Dramatic*

The islands are directly in the path of the tradewinds that blow down from southwestern Europe and Madeira, which perhaps accounts for the fact



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Nature shows her boundless palette above and below the sea.  
(Left) St. John's palm trees are caressed by the year-round trade winds.

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(Above) Fort Christiansvaern in charming Christiansted on St. Croix is more than two centuries old. (Left) Sailing and exploring the many nearby islands is a favorite sport.

that Santa Cruz, now known as St. Croix, was among the first lands to be sighted by Columbus on his second voyage westward. Columbus sailed into the Salt River estuary to renew his supply of fresh water and then sailed on, north and east, sighting St. Thomas, St. John, Tortola, and other islands. He named them collectively "Las Virgenes," reportedly after the 11,000

virgins of St. Ursula, and the name has come down to us as the "Virgin Islands."

St. Croix was thus the first of the land now under the American flag to be visited by the great explorer, and it was here also that the first fight between Europeans and aboriginal Americans occurred. The Spaniards did not find a high degree of civilization

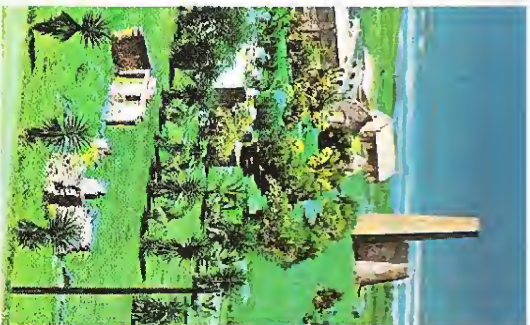
among the Carib Indians, who occupied the islands at the time of Columbus' voyage.

The warlike practices of the Caribs discouraged settlement of the Lesser Antilles for a long time. During the first 50 years of Spanish settlement of Puerto Rico, Carib raids from St. Croix were frequent. One of the first fortifications built in San Juan, La

Fortaleza, was intended principally as a protection against the Caribs. They became so troublesome to the Spanish that the King of Spain gave Ponce de Leon a special license to hunt them.

From the time the West Indies were first sighted by Columbus, their history has been entwined with the colonial expansion of the European powers. During the 17th century, France, Eng-





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land, Spain, Holland, and finally Denmark sought their control. Sugar soon became the most important reason for controlling the islands, for any European power that could grow and import its own sugar had a commercial advantage over the others. The important position sugar held in the history of Europe is indicated by the fact that in 1763, when England and France were negotiating the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, English diplomats seriously considered whether to retain Canada or the Island of Guadeloupe in the French West Indies.

The Virgin Islands were part of this colonial struggle. In 1671, Denmark, in an attempt to reap some of the rewards of West Indies commerce, chartered the Danish West India Company and began colonizing St. Thomas and, shortly after, St. John. St. Croix was purchased by Denmark from France in 1733, and, except for a brief period of English occupation during the Napoleonic Wars, remained under Danish control until 1917.

Due largely to Denmark's policy of neutrality during European wars, and the liberal trading laws of the Danish Crown, prosperity flourished in these tiny islands. Charlotte Amalie on St. Thomas became a famous port and traded extensively with the New England States. On St. Croix, sugar plantations and stone windmill towers used for grinding cane dotted the countryside. Pirates, among them the notorious Captain Kidd, often attempted to dispossess of their booty on these islands. Another well-known early-day inhabitant was Alexander Hamilton, a native of the West Indies, who in 1772 was an apprentice accountant on St. Croix. Slaves were imported to the Virgin Islands as early as 1763 to work the

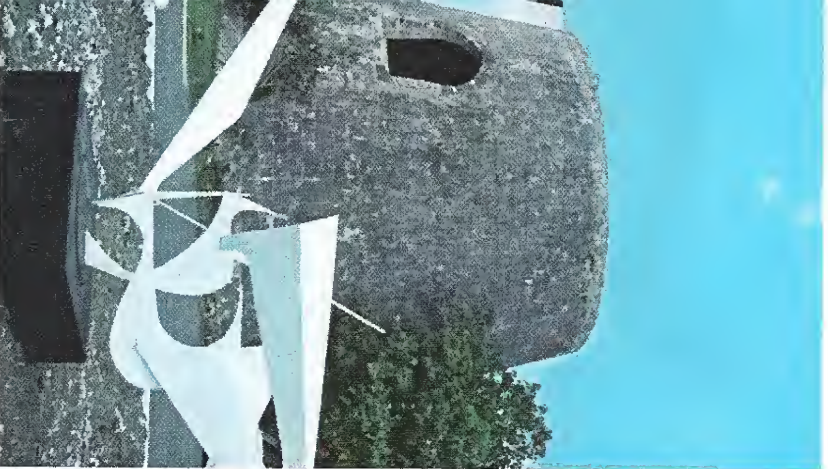
sugar plantations, for it soon became evident that the importation of Danish criminals was economically unsound. The islands were also used as a base for the reshipment of slaves to other areas.

Before the slaves were freed in 1848, plantation owners had questioned the practicality of keeping them. Twice the slaves revolted, and once they held the island of St. John for six months. The Danes were not able to end the insurrection until the French aided them by sending a force from Martinique. According to tradition, the slaves killed themselves either by jumping from a cliff or by shooting themselves. About 300 are supposed to have joined hands and jumped off a rock cliff on the northern shore of St. John rather than face the terrible punishment then inflicted for revolt.

Beginning in 1865, the United States, which had been embarrassed by the lack of a naval base in the Caribbean during the Civil War, made overtures to Denmark on the sale of the islands. Negotiations were carried on periodically over many years. During World War I, fear that Germany intended to acquire the islands provided the final impetus toward United States purchase. The transfer was completed in 1917 for a payment of \$25 million to Denmark.

The Government of the Virgin Islands is organized under the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands, enacted by the Congress of the United States, July 22, 1954. It has three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial.

(Continued on page 18)



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The remnants of many sugar plantations and stone windmill towers give evidence of the past importance of this industry. (Right) Inter-island trading of produce still abounds.



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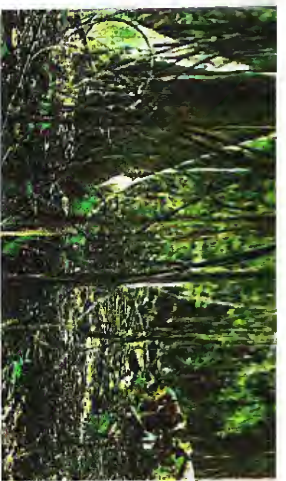
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## Islands of Beauty and Light

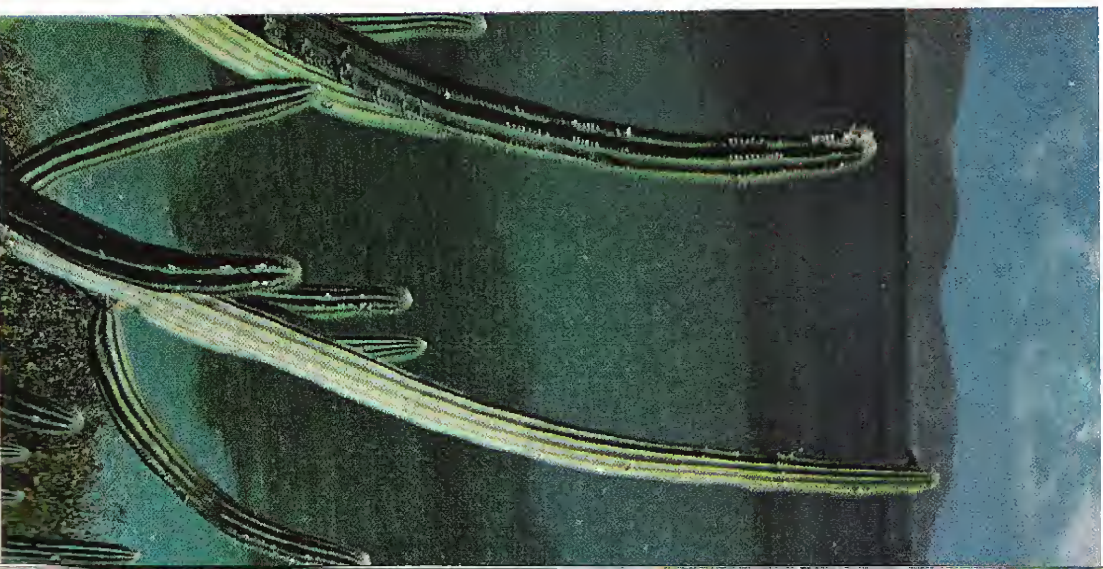
Scenic variety is the keynote of our Caribbean Gems, from the rain forests of St. Croix to the cactus that dot many a hillside. Crystal clear waters of the day change to buccaneers' gold by sunset, in constant displays of beauty and light.



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The executive power is vested in the Governor of the Virgin Islands, appointed by the President of the United States with the advice and consent of the Senate. Beginning in November 1970 the Governor will be popularly elected. There are twelve executive departments of the government, the heads of which are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Legislature.

Legislative power is vested in the Legislature of the Virgin Islands, a single body composed of fifteen senators popularly elected for two-year terms. Legislation is subject to the approval of the Governor. Bills disapproved by the Governor may be passed over his veto by a two-thirds majority, but if a bill is vetoed twice by the Governor, it is sent to the President of the United States for final approval or disapproval.

The judicial power of the Virgin Islands rests with certain local courts and in the District Court of the Virgin Islands. The District Court has certain local jurisdiction as well as jurisdiction in cases arising under Federal law. The judge and the district attorney are appointed by the President of the United States with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Since the census of 1960, the resident population of the Virgin Islands has jumped from 32,099 to an estimated 55,000 as of July 1, 1968, including alien workers and part-time residents. The majority of the residents are descendants of the slaves who worked the old Danish plantations, and persons of French origin who migrated



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The sounds of happy people in a happy land are heard in the music of a steel band and the voices of the young citizens of our Virgin Islands.



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many years ago from the French West Indies. The remainder of the population is of Danish, Spanish, Scotch, and Portuguese descent, with an ever-increasing influx of persons from the United States mainland and nearby Puerto Rico. English is the traditional language of the Virgin Islands, though French is spoken by some of the citizens of French descent and Spanish by the Puerto Ricans. The populace is religious and worships in many churches including Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Jewish, Moravian, Seventh Day Adventist, Pilgrim Holiness, Christian Mission, Dutch Reformed, and Baptist.

All residents of the Virgin Islands who are citizens of the United States, and 21 years of age or over, have the right to vote in local elections. They do not send representatives to the U.S. Congress, nor do they participate in our national elections. The people of the Virgin Islands have been citizens of the United States since 1927.

### *Tourism Principal Industry*

Tourism has become the principal industry of the Virgin Islands. Tourist expenditures leaped from \$4 million in 1951 to an estimated \$125 million in 1969. The pleasant year-round climate and the magnificent beaches, swimming, and snorkeling have made the Virgin Islands the prime tourist area of the Caribbean. Accommodations are plentiful and excellent. Jet travel has made the trip from the mainland convenient and relatively inexpensive. No passports or visas are necessary. The virtual free port status of the Islands and a special customs advantage of \$200 in duty-free purchases are major attractions to shoppers who choose from merchandise the world over. For



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For the tourist the islands offer a guaranteed year-round climate for lazing in sun, fishing, water-skiing, swimming, snorkeling and boating.



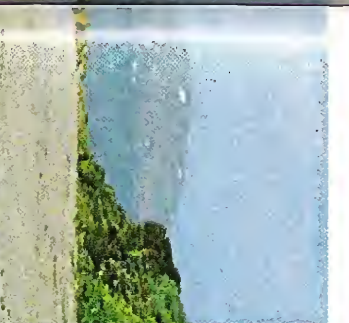
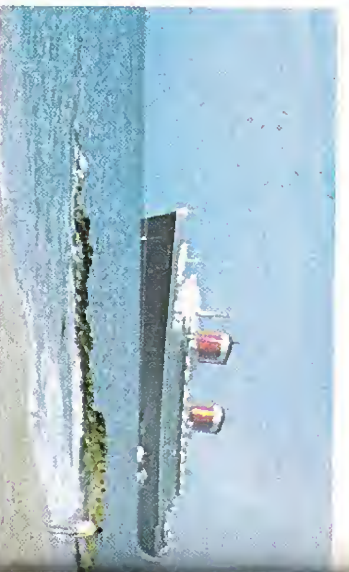
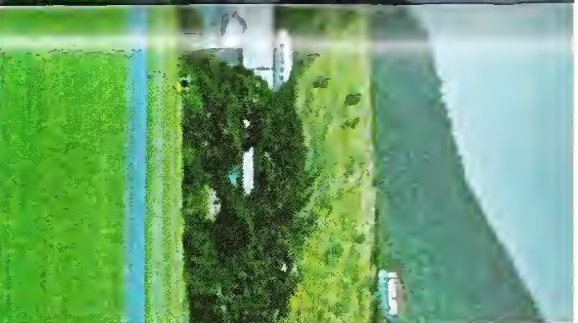
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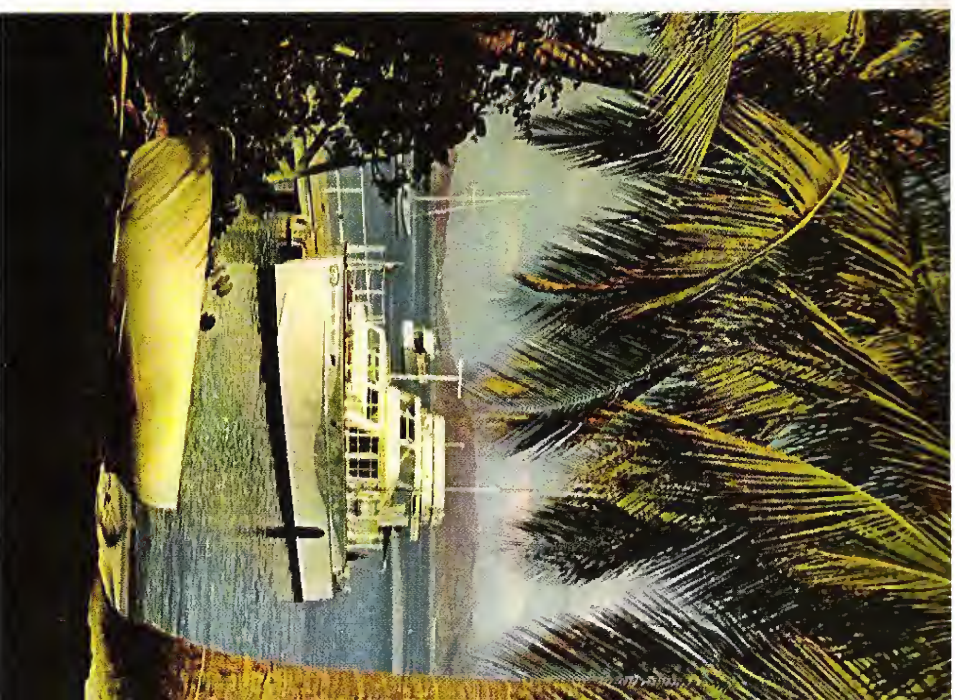
TOP 28

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Our islands in the sun are now the prime tourist area of the Caribbean, with daily jet flights and plush cruise ships serving them year-round. Private yachts, sailboats and air-taxis are used for inter-island travel.

this reason, the Islands have also become a popular port of call for cruise ships. Among visitors' favorite attractions are the National Park on St. John, the underwater trail on Buck Island off St. Croix, and incomparable Mogens Bay on St. Thomas. The old agricultural days, particularly the raising of sugar cane, have passed.

In addition to tourism, the Islands are attracting new industries to provide the broad base necessary for a stable



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economy. These include a new \$40 million alumina plant, a \$35 million oil refinery, watch assembly plants, woollen yard goods processing, and construction material outlets. A tax incentive program is conducted to attract desirable new industries to the Islands. The making of rum continues as an important industry. Small truck farming is encouraged as well as the raising of livestock. Water problems, caused in the past by unreliable rainfall and the small number of wells, are rapidly

being solved through the conversion of salt water to fresh. Desalination plants on St. Thomas are already converting more than a million gallons a day and another plant has been constructed on St. Croix. Additional water needs are supplied by cistern catchments and by barge from Puerto Rico.

Local labor is in short supply and many persons from nearby Islands are employed on the three American islands, principally in hotels, in construction, and in homes. In industries

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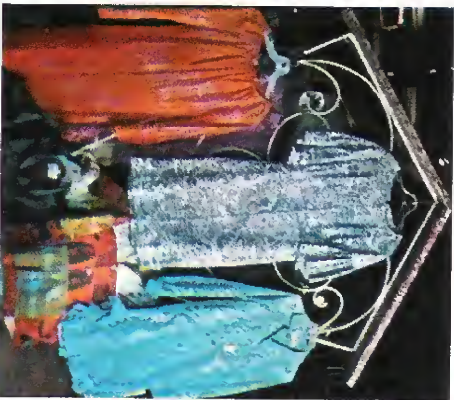


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Bargains of the world are found in the shops of the \$200-duty-free Virgin Islands. Exquisite cuisine and accommodations delight the tourists.



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covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act, the minimum wage in the Virgin Islands is generally the same as in the States.

### Health and Education Programs Flourish

Health and education problems that affect most tropical islands are virtually non-existent in the Virgin Islands. Tremendous strides have been made in the preservation of health, the development of education, and the replacement of slums with adequate, modern housing.

Though the cost of living is high, per capita income has advanced almost to mainland standards. Public and private housing has mushroomed and new programs constantly are being developed. Modern hospitals and clinics and improved public health services have eradicated diseases once common in tropical climates. Two multi-million-dollar medical centers are planned.

Upgrading of educational standards has been stressed in the past few years. Public schools cover kindergarten through high school and the Islands' two major high schools received accreditation in 1964. A major construction program is underway to ease further the number of pupils per classroom. Vocational and technical training programs are in operation as well as pre-school and adult instruction courses.

A two-year College of the Virgin Islands awarded diplomas to its first class in 1965. It has now been expanded to a four-year institution.

### Communications Systems Are Modern

A dial telephone system operates on all three Virgin Islands and worldwide



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radio telegraph service is available. Direct dialing to the U.S. mainland and Puerto Rico is possible by marine cables. Four radio stations, two television stations, and five newspapers serve the Islands. Mainland newspapers are available on the day of publication.

## Transportation Adequate

The majority of Virgin Island visitors fly by jet planes to Puerto Rico and then in smaller planes to the Islands, but there is jet service directly to St. Croix and St. Thomas. Except for short-stay cruise ship passengers, few persons arrive by boat. Charter boats and native sloops carry travelers among the islands.

Rented vehicles, taxis, and buses provide local transportation. Most roads are paved, with continued improvement each year.

## Information for Visitors

The following hints may be helpful in planning your trip:

The temperature ranges from 70 to 90 degrees year-round, with an average mean of 78 degrees. The humidity is low. Typical attire is the same as in most mainland cities during the summer. Short-shorts are not allowed on the streets, but the great influx of tourists has made Bermuda shorts increasingly popular. Ties and coats are required in a few hotels for evening activities, but are not mandatory in most places. Cocktail clothes are worn at a few of the hotels. A light sweater is sometimes needed for evenings spent

in the mountains. Raincoats are practically unheard of — most people simply stand under an awning or porch to await the end of the brief showers. Comfortable shoes are "a must" for exploring.

Driving is on the left side of the road. Police will issue a courtesy driver's permit upon presentation of your state-side license. American cars and numerous foreign models can be purchased or rented. No passports, visas, or health certificates are needed for U.S. citizens. Federal Income Tax Laws apply in the Virgin Islands, but there is no local income tax. Postal rates and currency are the same as on the mainland. Electric current is standard 115 volts, 60 cycles, A.C.

During any 30-day period, residents of the United States may bring into the States \$200 worth of merchandise from the Virgin Islands free of duty, but not more than \$100 may be applied to articles acquired elsewhere than in the Virgin Islands.

For those wishing to take their cats or dogs, the following regulations apply: The owner must obtain an official health certificate stating that such animals are free from symptoms of infectious, contagious, or communicable disease and did not come from an area under quarantine for rabies. The certificate must accompany the animal upon entry. All cats and dogs more than eight weeks old must have been vaccinated against rabies within six months and not less than two weeks prior to date of shipment and must have a proper identification tag and a certificate of vaccination against rabies.



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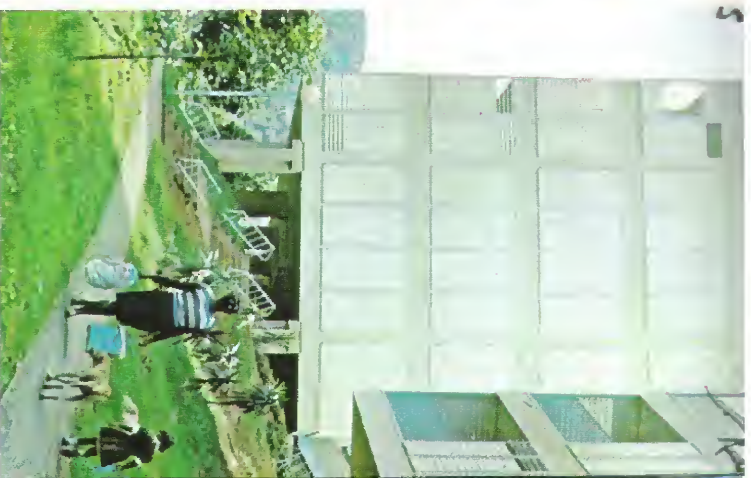


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Modern housing, new schools, hospitals and clinics, built in recent years, have raised the living standards of the island residents to near mainland status.



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TOP 41

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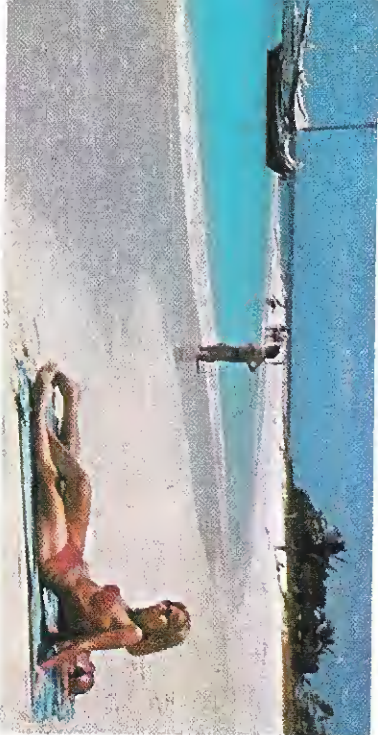




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(Above) Yachts of all sizes and types anchor at the world renowned Caneel Bay Plantation resort on St. John. (Bottom left) The white expanse of Buck Island beach off St. Croix draws both sunbathers and skindivers. (Bottom right) camping in the V.I. Nat. Park.

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## Business Opportunities

**Commissioner**  
Department of Commerce  
Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

## Employment

**U.S. Employment Service**  
Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801  
(Also in Christiansted, St. Croix  
00820)

**Personnel Officer**  
Government of the Virgin Islands  
Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

## General

**Chamber of Commerce**  
Post Office Box 324  
Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801  
(Also in Christiansted, St. Croix  
00820)

## Teaching

**Commissioner of Education**  
Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

**President**  
College of the Virgin Islands  
Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

## Real Estate

**President**  
Board of Realtors  
Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

## Taxes

**Government Secretary**  
Government of the Virgin Islands  
Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

## Tourism

**Tourist Bureau**  
Department of Commerce  
Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

**Virgin Islands Tourist**  
Information Office  
16 West 49th Street  
New York, New York 10020

**Virgin Islands Tourist**  
Information Office  
Room 1074, National Press Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20004

**Virgin Islands National Park**  
Superintendent  
National Park Service  
Box 1707  
Charlotte Amalie  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

## Health

**Commissioner of Health**  
Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

## Agriculture

**Commissioner of Agriculture**  
Charlotte Amalie,  
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801



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(Front and back covers) A beautiful view of St. John's back bays and nearby islands, as seen from Bordeaux Mountain.

WALTER J. HICKEL

Secretary of the Interior

ELIZABETH P. FARRINGTON

Director, Office of Territories

Editor — Gladys Rafter

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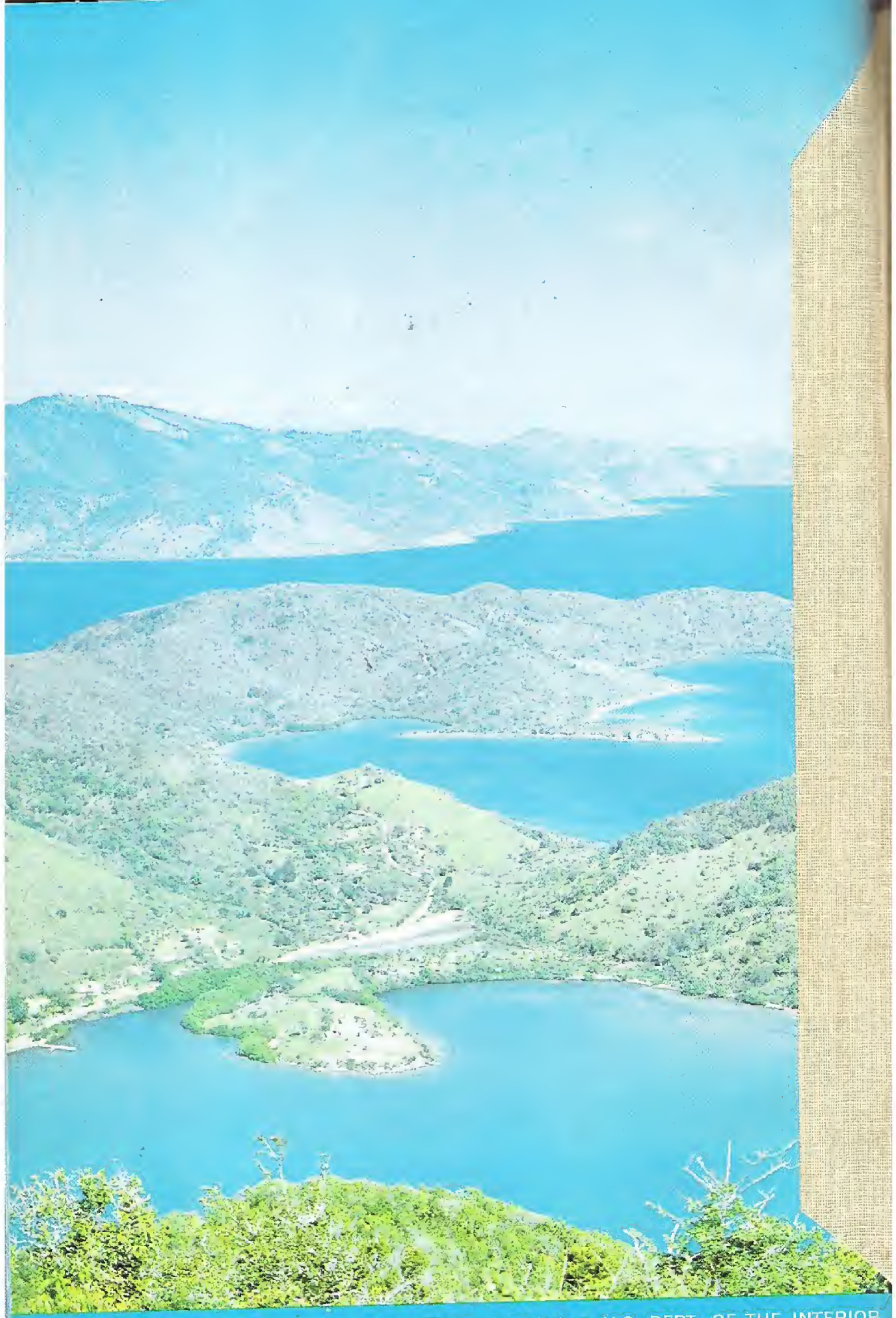


This quiet harbor anchorage on St. Croix is typical of the charm of "Our Caribbean Gems," enticing many a visitor to plan his retirement here.

Created in 1849, the Department of the Interior—a Department of Conservation—is concerned with the management, conservation, and development of the Nation's water, fish, wildlife, mineral, forest, and park and recreational resources. It also has major responsibilities for Indian and territorial affairs.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department works to assure that nonrenewable resources are developed and used wisely, that park and recreational resources are conserved for the future, and that renewable resources make their full contribution to the progress, prosperity, and security of the United States—now and in the future.





OUR CARIBBEAN GEMS THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS • U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR